

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, I proposed a simple challenge to my constituents back home in St. Louis. I said: Tell me your ideas for creating more jobs and economic opportunity in 2012, and I'll compile them and not only take them back to Washington but work to turn your ideas into action.

I want to thank the over 600 Missourians I heard from, each offering many of their own commonsense solutions to help our economy continue to grow.

I want to share their message on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives today. Their message was a clear consensus that we need to invest in our infrastructure, make things here in the U.S., bring manufacturing jobs back from overseas, educate and train our workforce for 21st century opportunities, and work together for the good of the country instead of pulling our country apart at the seams.

My constituents in St. Louis are deeply concerned that our communities will be left behind in this new global economy if we don't act now, right now, without delay.

As Joseph C. expressed best:

Missouri is a great State, but I'm afraid it will be left behind, and manufacturing jobs will go elsewhere.

Chris K., from St. Louis, sent me an email saying:

What would help my personal economic situation and those of many others would be a greater investment in our Nation's infrastructure.

Joseph P., from St. Louis, commented:

Investing in our infrastructure and educational systems will not only create jobs but will also result in long-term economic benefits for the entire Nation.

Karen M. said:

We need to realize how important good carpenters, plumbers, electricians, bricklayers, secretaries, and caregivers are in the long scheme of things. We need to encourage and applaud these jobs.

As Kevin N. put it:

We need to invest in infrastructure for communications and transportation because public infrastructure is the greatest catalyst for economic development.

To create jobs, Diane M. said:

I have long thought that the unions and small businesses that require special skills should provide apprentice programs to students, which would give hope and possibility through real skills to thousands of students who would not be exposed to these trades otherwise.

And Christine A. echoed this sentiment by saying:

I believe it could be helpful to increase job training opportunities in our high schools.

We need to pull together to create economic opportunities across this country and for the good of the country. Marilyn B. wrote to me:

Personally, I'm really frustrated with both sides of the aisle not being willing to work together for the good of all.

As a Member of Congress, I pledge to work with my colleagues to see that these great ideas from America's heart-

land are developed further. By working together and reaching across the aisle, I'm confident we can grow jobs and economic opportunity across this country.

□ 1130

I look forward to using these commonsense ideas to build a blueprint for putting our economy back on track, to turn these great ideas into action.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 30 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, through whom we see what we could be and what we can become, thank You for giving us another day.

In these days, our Nation is faced with pressing issues of conscience, constitutional religious and personal rights, and matters of great political importance.

We thank You that so many Americans have been challenged and have risen to the exercise of their responsibilities as citizens to participate in the great debates of these days.

Grant wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to us all, as well as an extra measure of charity.

Send Your spirit upon the Members of this people's House who walk through this valley under public scrutiny. Give them peace and Solomonian prudence in their deliberations.

And may all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. QUAYLE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. QUAYLE. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a

quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. POE of Texas led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY: THE CONSTITUTION DEMANDS IT

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, religious liberty is under attack by the administration.

The right of religious liberty is guaranteed in the First Amendment of the Constitution because it is a foundation for other rights. Yet the administration is forcing religious organizations to violate their conscience by indirectly providing their employees with services that trample on those religious beliefs.

The administration's so-called "promise of accommodation" changes nothing. It is just political word games.

The issue is not about contraception. This is an issue about religious liberty. It affects not just Catholics, but many religions and individuals of faith.

Regardless of where Americans stand on the issue of contraception, sterilization or the morning-after pill, it should be alarming to all who believe the government should not persecute religion or substitute a government secular doctrine and impose it on citizens.

The Constitution does not accommodate for religious liberty, it demands it, whether this administration likes it or not.

And that's just the way it is.

STUDENT-LOAN BORROWER BILL OF RIGHTS

(Mr. CLARKE of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CLARKE of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I'm speaking directly to the American people today, to all families

who are burdened by student-loan debt. A solution is on the way. I am working on bills that will responsibly forgive certain student loans and provide every student-loan borrower with basic consumer protections by enacting a student-loan borrower bill of rights.

I urge every Member of Congress to help our American families get out of this debt so they can live better lives and create jobs for America.

PRESIDENT'S BUDGET: HIGHER TAXES, MORE DEBT

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, for 3 years, Americans have watched the President as he has tried to borrow and spend his way out of an economic recession. His failed policies have failed this Nation with unemployment still over 8 percent.

The Washington Examiner stated:

What this country needs is an honest leader who will tell the truth about our entitlement spending crisis and identify real reforms. But Obama's latest budget does none of that. Instead, he offers double doses of deficits, tax hikes, and crony capitalism. America deserves better.

Over the past year, House Republicans have passed dozens of pieces of legislation that decrease spending, provide tax cuts, and encourage job creation through private sector job growth. I urge the President and the liberal Senate to work with House Republicans to support legislation that promotes jobs.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

MAKE IT IN AMERICA

(Ms. HOCHUL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. HOCHUL. Mr. Speaker, from Buffalo to Rochester, New York, people in my district want to get back to work. They just need the opportunity. That's why during budget hearings yesterday with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland Security, I posed the question: Can our government be doing more to make sure that our limited Federal procurement dollars are being spent on jobs in manufacturing right back here in America?

The answer is, yes. They want to work with us, and we need to work together to make more of our limited dollars spent in companies that have a higher percentage of the American workforce right here making our defense systems and our products for the Department of Homeland Security. My policy is to give more preferences to those businesses based on the percentage of workers in America.

We need to have a policy that is going to reward those companies and

not penalize them. We need to create more opportunities for manufacturing right here in America and in my district in upstate New York.

So I look forward to working collaboratively. I'm going to introduce legislation that I expect to be bipartisan in nature. Who could not agree that we could do more to make it in America?

BUILDING BETTER BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS ACT OF 2012

(Mr. SCHILLING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHILLING. Mr. Speaker, when small businesses compete for government contracts, the government saves billions of dollars, and thousands of private sector jobs are created through these investments. However, the process of contracting can be needlessly time-consuming and onerous for small businesses to navigate. Last year, the Federal Government failed to meet the requirement for contracts awarded to small businesses. This complicated procurement procedure is hindering job creation and slowing our economic recovery.

Last week I introduced—along with my colleague, Representative JUDY CHU from California—H.R. 3985, Building Better Business Partnerships Act of 2012. H.R. 3985 focuses on improving and streamlining mentor-protege programs which pair new businesses looking to increase their government contracts with more experienced businesses. My bill will make mentor-protege programs more efficient and successful by placing the SBA in charge of overseeing and setting standards for programs based on what we know works. Ultimately, H.R. 3985 will make it easier for small business firms to compete.

□ 1210

WE ARE AT A CROSSROAD IN AMERICA

(Mr. BUTTERFIELD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. We are at a crossroad in America where we must decide if we're going to continue building economic recovery on the backs of middle- and low-income families, or whether we're going to ask wealthy Americans to join in the sacrifice by paying their fair share.

Too many Americans have already made sacrifices to aid our slow moving economy and reduce the deficit. The military had to scale back, Federal workers had to take a pay freeze, health care providers had to take a pay cut, but we have not required those who can actually afford it to share in the sacrifice.

Changing our Nation's tax policies is not about redistribution of wealth; it's about fairness, doing what's best for

the American people. If those who can afford it don't make the sacrifice, the survival of America will be affected.

The President's budget will ensure that those who have been blessed with a portfolio that has multiplied under the Bush tax cuts will no longer be the primary beneficiaries of tax cuts and policies.

I urge my colleagues to insist that all Americans, including the rich, share the pain of this recovery.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S PROPOSED BUDGET IS DEBT ON ARRIVAL

(Mr. BUCHANAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, the President released his budget for next year. It fails to reduce the national debt by one penny. That's why it's already being called "debt on arrival."

Under this budget, for the fourth consecutive year, our Nation's deficit will be measured in the trillions of dollars. Let me repeat that. For four consecutive years, trillions of dollars in deficit.

Failure to address our mounting debt crisis puts us on the same course as Greece. We need to act, and act now. Repeating the reckless spending patterns of the past defies common sense.

It's time for Washington to make the tough choices necessary to balance the budget for taxpayers today and future generations. The American people deserve nothing less.

COMMENDING PRESIDENT OBAMA'S COMMITMENT TO PROMOTING INNOVATION

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, the catchword is "innovation." President Obama has made it clear that on the road to economic recovery we must also make long-term investments in American innovation.

In his FY 2013 budget proposal, President Obama reasserted his commitment to an agenda that supports startups and small businesses, where new jobs are created. President Obama proposed to expand tax relief while eliminating regulations that prevent aspiring entrepreneurs from getting the financing that is needed to grow.

The President's budget also calls for a \$2.2 billion investment to support advanced manufacturing research and development programs to assist our business community throughout the country. President Obama's budget also creates a manufacturing capacity for vital defense technologies and dramatically improves production and distribution of manufactured goods.

Mr. Speaker, I commend President Obama for his commitment to keeping